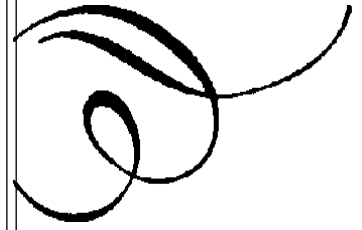


**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND
WORDS @ PLAINFIELD-GUILFORD
TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY**

*by Joyce Welkie,
Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library*



One look at the entrance to the Children's Room of the Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library and you'll be amazed at the sights you'll see. The floor-to-ceiling interior windows are painted with eye-catching signs and pictures that promote upcoming children's programs.

Children's library assistant and professional artist, Laura Appleby, is the creator of these wonderful works of art that capture the attention of library patrons. She uses her imagination and books on lettering styles to create unique signs that are attractive and memorable. Signs that promote a series of programs are updated to reflect the next performer and date.

In preparation for the summer reading program, Laura paints a large theme-related picture on the window so children can add an item to record their reading progress during the summer. A huge birthday cake adorned our window in the summer of 2001 when the library celebrated its 100th birthday. For every 100 hours that the children read, they added one candle to the cake. The number of candles that adorned the cake by August astounded us. All patrons who entered the library could keep track of the reading progress by watching the candles grow on the birthday cake. This summer children are adding colored dots to a huge caterpillar/bookworm as they read toward their goal with our "Don't Bug Me ... I'm Reading" theme.

The newly constructed children's room has a domed ceiling area which Laura has enhanced by painting fanciful clouds. Children try to locate clouds that look like a sailboat, a school bus, an ice cream cone, and even a dragon. The staff enjoy watching the children use their imagination as they name the clouds. Just below the dome, paper sacks and Laura's magical touch have transformed a plain white pillar into a tree which takes on multiple personalities. To create the tree, paper sacks were crinkled and soaked in wallpaper paste before placing on the pillar to look like tree bark. Cardboard was cut to form 3-dimensional "branches" and taped to the pillar before getting a covering of "bark." During spring, summer and fall, the children are encouraged to trace their hands on colored paper (light green for spring, dark green for summer and orange,

yellow, brown and red for fall) and cut out the hand shapes to turn into "leaves" when placed on the tree branches. In winter, the tree is adorned with Christmas tree lights, paper snowflakes, shamrocks and even red hearts for Valentine's Day. Allowing the children to participate in the decorating of the tree or picture on the window gives them a feeling of ownership as they look for "their" leaf, candle, caterpillar spot, or whatever, when they make a return visit.

Being surrounded by colorful artwork has inspired another library assistant, Paula Gilmour, to create a fun log cabin reading nook for children. Using a large refrigerator cardboard box, she cut out rectangles for a door and windows, and used a roll of 36" brown craft paper to create paper "logs" which were taped to the cardboard box. Paper "shingles" were added to the pitched roof along with a cardboard chimney covered with gray paper "rocks." The log cabin was used during February to celebrate Abe Lincoln's birthday, and then was transformed into a cottage complete with "shutters" on the windows and "grass" growing at its base. Children were encouraged to glue a paper cut out "flower" to the cottage each time they visited the children's room. Paula and Laura are planning to transform the cottage into a "gingerbread house" in December. Children will add cut out paper "candy" to the house during each visit.

Not every library is fortunate enough to have a professional artist on its staff. Don't let that stop you from creating attractive signs and works of art that advertise your library. Start with the help of some drawing and lettering books, washable paints, artist's paint brushes, cardboard boxes, then mix in a creative imagination and the *time* to put it all together. An alternative solution is to seek the assistance of community volunteers. A school art club or local artist group may enjoy your library promotions gig as a community service project. Get ideas from other libraries by visiting their web sites and visit our site at www.plainfield.lib.in.us/children/child.htm then click on photo album.

*For further information, contact Joyce Welkie at
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Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library Photo Album



Above: Clouds in domed ceiling before tree was made



Above: Clouds in domed ceiling before tree was made



Above: Signs painted on interior windows



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Above: Signs painted on interior windows

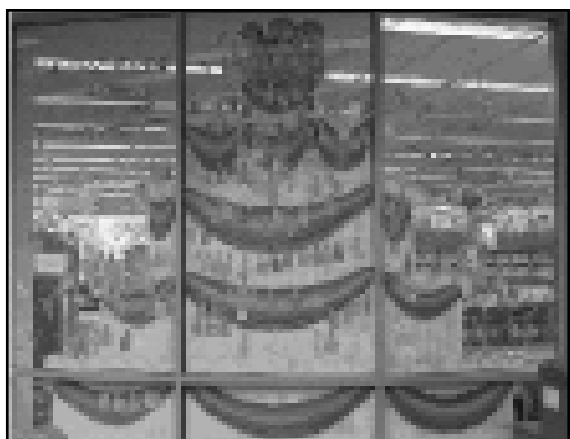


Above: Laura Appleby adding paper insects to paper block letters advertising summer reading theme

Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library



Above: Tree with hand-shaped leaves



Above: Large birthday cake with candles added as children read for 100 minutes.

Below: log cabin reading nook



A Small Sample of the
Plainfield-Guilford Township
Public Library Photo Album